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RESEARCH TRAINING IN THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY OF CHINA

Hsin-hua Yueh-nao, No 5
Peiping, May 1953, p 209

[Comment: The following report summarizes an article entitled, "How the People's University of China is Training Research Students," which was originally published in the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao on 9 April 1953. The article describes the curriculum, student enrollment, and organization of the research units of the university.]

The People's University of China since 1950 has organized the following courses: Finance, Marxism-Leninism, Problems of the Chinese Revolution, Law, Foreign Affairs, and 38 teaching and research units (six have no students). These research units were established with the assistance of the university president and Soviet specialists. Two years later the university had 1,969 research students; of that number 441 were already teachers. More than 200 students were transferred because they were not qualified for training. At present, there are 1,216 research students.

Regarding the quality of students and the duration of their training period, under the present circumstances, we cannot demand too much from them, but must consider whether their basic qualifications justify their training. On the other hand, our requirements cannot be too low, because we will fail to train research students and waste manpower which would otherwise be occupied with other tasks.

The research students can be divided into three groups: First, the work cadres. The greatest number of these are new cadres with 3 and 4 years of experience. Approximately 5 percent are experienced cadres from the Sino-Japanese war period. Their political experience is comparatively good; their ideological level is higher; they are eager to study and willing to undergo hardships; however, their cultural level is generally lower. Another group is made up of the young intellectuals. Their cultural standard is higher; they are receptive to the truth; however, the level of their political ideology is generally lower. In addition, there is a small number of former university teachers and assistants. Although their cultural level is higher and they have some professional knowledge, their political ideology is very low and they are imbued with bourgeois thoughts. Taking these groups as a whole, they have no systematic knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, nor do they have specialized training or the capacity for self-study.

The university student first studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism for one year or 1 1/2 years; then he studies scientific and specialized courses (one required course and two electives) for one year or 1 1/2 years. The second and third year research student also studies Russian. Approximately 28 percent of the time is devoted to the study of political theory; approximately 22 percent to the Russian language, and approximately 50 percent to specialized subjects.

To combine theory and practice and expand the educational achievements, the student before graduation must spend 4-6 weeks studying and practicing production in progressive enterprises, mines, farms, cooperatives, and government agencies. During the student's practice in production, he must apply theory to practice and write a report on production.

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The basic training methods consist of systematic lectures combined with self-study. At the beginning of each period the Soviet specialists and Chinese teachers lecture on the important points of a subject. Following the lecture, the student reads and studies the required reference books and takes notes. The teacher sets aside a definite time for students who need help. Classroom discussion is then held. After his specialized study, the student under the guidance of the Soviet specialists correlates and summarizes in an essay what he has studied. Finally, the student prior to graduation practices teaching two to three times.

Each of the 32 training research units has its specialized research training plan which strictly prescribes each course, production practice, scientific essays, practice teaching, and examination periods. Each course has a schedule of lecture and discussion topics and a catalogue of reference books.

Starting this year, the university decided to select students who had already studied Marxism-Leninism and had certain specialized knowledge, and use the prescribed Soviet methods to train them. Under the direction of the Soviet specialists and designated teachers, the research plan for each student will be formulated. The amount of time devoted to political theory thereafter will be reduced, and research in specialized science will be emphasized. The teaching methods will not be those of the classroom type, but will emphasize independent research.

In each training research unit, the Soviet specialists who are science teachers, aside from writing textbooks and reference works, put their primary efforts into the training of teachers. Thus, each student in the research units receives direct guidance and assistance from the Soviet specialists.

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